have decided that preference will be accorded to the power and steel sectors. It has further been decided that preference in allocation should be given to power projects of 500 MW and above and steel plants with more than one million tonne per annum capacity.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise in view of reply given to part (d) above.

Merger of ITI with BSNL and MTNL

2890. SHRIMATI S.G.INDIRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some of the six units of the ITI did not have enough work and that the available orders could not be executed for want of working capital;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that a demand has been received by Government to merge the ITI with the BSNL and MTNL to overcome the problems of ITI; and

(d) if so, Government's views in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) All the six units of ITI have orders for manufacture of telecom equipments/ turnkey solutions. Due to losses and financial constraints, the company is not able to raise sufficient working capital and thereby affecting its ability to execute the orders.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Department of Telecommunications has received a demand to merge ITI with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL). However, no synergy would be achieved by such a merger because BSNL/MTNL are service providers and ITI is a telecom manufacturing unit.

Introduction of local calls between metropolitan cities

†2891. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether calls between Delhi and Mumbai have become local, w.e.f. 1st June, 2006;

(b) if so, the amount of increase *per mensem* in MTNL income on account of that;

(c) whether in view of success of this scheme Government propose to introduce this scheme in other Metropolis as well;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, the calls from Delhi MTNL landline to Mumbai MTNL landline and *vice versa* is being charged at the local rate of Rs. 1.20 per 3 minutes with effect from 1st June, 2006.

(b) It is too early to assess the increase in income of MTNL *per mensem* on account of this scheme. However, traffic between Delhi and Mumbai has increased considerably after introduction of the scheme on 1st June, 2006.

(c) and (d) At present, there is no such proposal in BSNL to introduce this scheme in other Metropolis which falls under its licensed area of operation.

(e) BSNL is a Pan-India operator, offering services in both urban as well as rural areas and offers uniform tariff to all subscribers in accordance with Interconnect User Charges (IUC) regulation prescribed by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) from time to time. Tariff based on specific destination especially for metropolitan cities is difficult to implement.

Telecom network in Orissa

2892. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI SURENDRA LATH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of revenue villages in the country that are connected with the telecom network especially in Orissa;

(b) the steps Government are taking to improve the tele-density of rural areas in different States especially in Orissa;